Senior Planners Course Origins

"This course fulfills a void in our education continuum for our Senior Officers in between Top Level School (TLS) and follow-on education post-TLS. The curriculum is based in Service strategic planning/thinking skills among Colonels to fill that void. Implementing the SPC will fill this recognized gap by creating capable strategic planners and leaders serving at HQMC, MCCDC, OSD/Joint Staff, COCOM, and NATO/Coalition staffs."

MajGen Neller, CG EDCOM 2010
Proof of Concept Letter, CG TECOM

SPC Key Tasks / Implied Tasks / Methods

Key Tasks

1. Look "two levels" up from MEF (at the interface of Strategy and Policy)
2. Change "how they think" (**Transformational Learning** = a new schema or mental model)
3. Shape perception of "value added" for the student and sending Commander
4. Equip the students with "how to orient the staff" ISO the "decision-maker's" thinking and decision-making process

Implied Tasks

1. Elevate the focus **"two levels up"** (interface of policy and strategy)
2. Increase **"time to think"**
3. Decrease reading and decrease number of classes
4. Broaden horizons (Cyber, NDU, OLA, Think Tanks)
5. Equip the student on **"how to orient the staff"** IOT "help" the decision-maker think and make decisions.
6. Increase engagement with Senior Leaders (GO/FOs, Policy makers, Congress & Think Tanks)
7. Change **"how the students think"**
   a. Transformational Learning = a new schema or mental model
   b. Increase Critical and Creative Thinking and Decision-Making
   c. Increase Red Teaming methods
   d. Increase Design

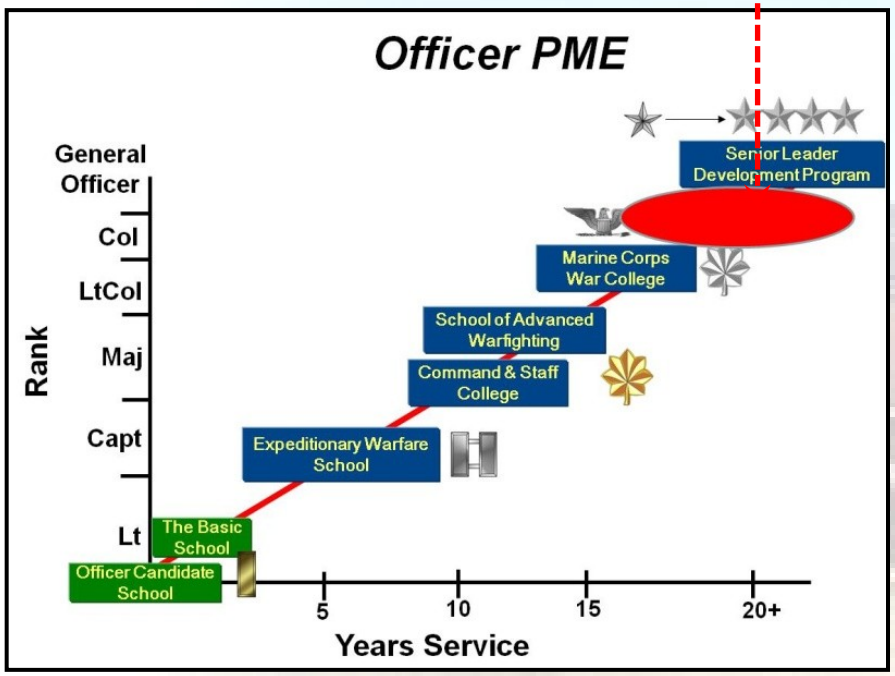
Methods

Case Studies | Practical Application | Oral Presentations

Seminar Discussions | Guided Discussions | Wargaming

Synthesis seminars following guest speakers/policy makers | Interagency Participation

Current SPC Model



- ***Requirement***
  - No structured PME post-TLS for O6's
  - Opportunity to enhance skills of selected officers and encourage innovative approaches to problem solving
- ***Purpose of the Course***
  - To provide focused education on operational and strategic-level planning and problem solving for senior officers likely to assume the most challenging USMC billets
- ***Prerequisites***
  - *O6's Likely to assume Key Billet. Ideally:*
    - *MARFOR/MEF/MSC G-3/G-4/G-5/G-2*
    - *HQMC DC EA*
  - O5 Command / O6 Command (desired)

SPC Curriculum Construct

Ph 1 - Foundations

- The Nature of Warfare
- The Strategic Environment
- Joint Arena
- The Whole of Government
- Critical Thinking
- Decision-Making

Ph 2 – Planning & Op Art

- Marine Corps Concepts
- Operational Art
- Design & Planning
- Componency/Command Relationships
- Role of the Commander
- Interagency/Coalition Ops
- Red Teaming

Ph 3 - Application

- Case Methods
- Staff Ride (Antietam)
- Course preparation time
- (100-150 pages per night)